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Report

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Word Clouds

In today’s society, people’s attention spans have greatly shortened. It is hard to engage students in the classroom and once engaged it is hard to keep their focus. Students are used to the high quality technology that they use in their everyday life. They need the technology to be incorporated into their educational plans, because it will help them focus and learn better. Unfortunately, technology devices are not always able to be used in every lesson. Therefore, different attention grabbers must be used. Word Clouds is one of those helpful attention grabbers.

Many people probably have seen word clouds and not know that is what it was. I’m one of those people. I also did not know there were generators online to help one make their own word cloud. Word clouds are used on various websites, flyers, brochures, advertisements, worksheets, t-shirts, etc. A word cloud is exactly what it sounds like, a cluster of words. Specifically, it is an image composed of words used in a particular text or subject, in which the size of each word indicates its frequency or importance. Word clouds are frequently used to help visually present data to an audience, they are popular for text analysis, and to show trends or patterns that could easily go unnoticed.

Tables and graphs were once a popular way to present and explain data. Word clouds draw more attention and will captivate an audience quicker than the tables or graphs will. The appearance is more appealing and the material is easier to understand. It is more effective when word clouds are shaped into an image that reflects the topic or theme. Word clouds help presenters to communicate their most important points. They draw attention to common themes on a particular subject. It is important to remember when creating a word cloud to choose an appropriate title. Word clouds are simple and understandable the title should follow this standard. An easy title helps to make the word cloud even more self-explanatory.

New users to word cloud may find creating one a little confusing. There are many word cloud generators available online. The most popular generator is Wordle. It is easy, creative, and free. You simply copy and paste the text you want into a box. Then Wordle generates the word cloud and you will have the option to edit the font style and colors of the cloud. Before creating a word cloud there are some helpful tips for users. It is important to take the time to clean up your data/text before inserting it into a generator. You should remove conversation fillers. Be consistent with your keywords. Once the word cloud has been created, validate your findings by viewing the open text and comparing it to your word cloud. It is important to ensure the appropriate keywords are enhanced, to be certain that your audience will easily understand key points.

Word cloud expresses information in a fun and creative way. When added to a worksheet or a lecture, they can help to engage students. They are easily created and understood. On the other hand, it is important to know the limitations. Word clouds do not share the whole story with an audience. When using a word cloud to spice a presentation or anything up, it is necessary to briefly communicate the limitations to the audience. Be sure that everyone understands there is more than likely more to be uncovered. Even though limitations are present with word clouds they are a helpful, creative, and fun resource to use.